OTTAWA metro®

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Pot without the munchies

...and the celebrity behind the idea. Page 15

INFANT TO UNDERGO GENE THERAPY

Barrhaven baby Étienne Blais was born with a rare, life-threatening immune disorder that makes him very vulnerable to colds and flu. His parents, Pierre and Monika, are taking him to Los Angeles for experimental treatment in April. To hear how the family is coping, see page 8. COURTESY ELIZABETH FULTON

Uber 'gouges' clients, taxi operator says

Ride sharing. Price surges come under fire

LUCY SCHOLEY
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Ottawa's taxi industry sent another anti-Uber message on Monday.

This time, taxi operator Coventry Connections is taking a stab at the ride-share app's "confusing increases in prices" — or price surges, which kick in when demand is high.

Daniel Coates, a spokesman for Coventry Connections, called it "gouging."

"It seems to look like a bit of a trend, where a driver will cancel an Uber request, only to be hit with surge pricing when they try to re-book a couple minutes later," he said.

Coventry Connections is also re-promoting its Ottawa Taxi App, which is about a year old. It works similarly to Uber in that users can hail cabs online and track them en route.

"The reason it's being marketed more is definitely in response to new competition, new dispatch services that exist in Ottawa," said Coates.

The difference is Uber is unregulated, meaning its drivers and cars are not licensed.

Xavier Van Chau, a spokesman for Uber, said surge pricing encourages more Uber drivers to come out when demand is high.

"There's a very transparent system in place to notify that individual that that price is in play," he said. "If they don't want to take that surge price, they can just click a button and ask to be notified when dynamic pricing is no longer in effect."

There's also a 24-hour feedback system so users can lodge complaints, he said.

Van Chau welcomes the Ottawa Taxi App, as he said more competition is better for consumers. Coates said he's OK with more competition, too, as long as new companies play by the rules.

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Child-care pay hike applauded

Wages. Provincial budget set aside $269 million in funding over three years for early childhood educators

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Ottawa MPPs Marie-France Lalonde and Yasir Naqvi discuss the province's new pay hike for early childhood educators at the YMCA in Orleans on Monday. JOE LOFARO/METRO

Staff at the YMCA in Orleans welcomed the provincial government's announcement Monday that licensed early childhood educators will be getting the first of two wage increases beginning this year.

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced licensed early childhood educators will receive a $1-an-hour increase starting this month and an additional $1 hike next year.

The wage increases were outlined in last year's budget in an effort to close the gap between early childhood educators working in the publicly funded education system and those in the licensed child-care sector.

"It's time to bridge that gap," said Wynne in Kingston on Monday.

At the YMCA on Centrum Boulevard in Ottawa, Beverly Renaud, senior co-ordinator of child-care programming, said in the past two years she has lost at least four staff members, who left to go to full-day kindergarten to make more money.

"It's a natural thing when you have a chance to make more money in the same position," said Renaud at the facility, where MPPs Marie-France Lalonde and Yasir Naqvi discussed details of the wage increase.

Naqvi said the pay hike could be an incentive for home daycares that aren't licensed to become licensed through the Ministry of Education and to protect existing child-care providers from losing frontline workers.

"We want to narrow that gap and of course assist organizations like YMCA to recruit and retain their staff," said Naqvi.

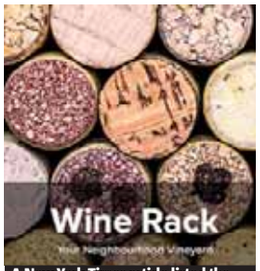
But not everyone in the child-care industry is entitled to a pay hike.

Only licensed early child-care educators making less than $26.27 an hour are eligible and it's up to child-care operators to apply for the provincial funding.

There are more than 5,000 licensed child-care centres across Ontario. And according to the Education Ministry, since 2003 access to licensed child care has grown by more than 130,000 spaces.

WITH FILES FROM TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ByWard Market article doesn't impress locals



A New York Times article listed the Wine Rack as one of the top spots in the ByWard Market. WINERACK.COM

A New York Times article about Ottawa's "notoriously sleepy" ByWard Market set off an impassioned debate about the hippest spots in the four-block stretch on the weekend — but at least it stirred discussion, says an Ottawa Tourism representative.

The article, written by Montreal freelancer Rose Maura Lorre, placed the government-owned Wine Rack at the top of her must-see list.

"Until recently," the article reads, "downtown Ottawa's ByWard Market … suffered from a common capital-city affliction: After hours, it turned notoriously sleepy. Lately, however, numerous chefs and entrepreneurs have reimagined and reinvigorated the area, ushering in a new era of one-of-a-kind shopping, hybrid establishments, and must-try bars and restaurants."

Some disagreed online.

T.J. Goertz (@TJGoertz) said: @rosemauralorre So like, you do know The Wine Rack has more than 160 outlets in Ontario and is hardly a reason to visit Ottawa, right?

Sarah Little (@SLitts) said: @rosemauralorre Sister, someone needs to take you out properly. #ottcity not represented here.

But Jantine Van Kregten, the communications director for Ottawa Tourism, came to Lorre's defence.

"I think this is a subject where everyone can have an opinion and everyone is correct because it's a subjective thing," she said. "How I experience the ByWard Market won't be the same as how you experience it or how someone in their teens might experience it."

Lorre attempted to set the record straight about the story and her advocacy for Wine Rack.

"I did know it wasn't an independently owned business," she said in an interview with Torstar News Service. "It wasn't an indie shop by any stretch. But I did find it charming that it was promoting Canadian varietals." LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

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Documentary. A Canadian Muslim's identity struggle

The subject of an upcoming documentary about the challenges of being a Muslim woman in Canada says Canadians should be more educated about the religion before they jump to stereotypes and "paint everybody with the same brush."

Muneeza Sheikh is a 33-year-old Toronto lawyer, wife and mother of two small children. She is a practising Muslim who prays regularly and fasts during Ramadan.

She also lives what some call a "flashy" lifestyle, with expensive clothes and fillers implanted in her face.

Born and raised in Toronto and brought up with Islamic values, Sheikh was caught between the modern and traditional worlds telling her how to live and how to look.

The film centres on the internal struggle she faced when her religion crossed paths with her Canadian values.

"Now that I'm raising my own daughter, I question myself a lot," she said in an interview on Monday.

She chose not to wear the hijab on her head, and now that her six-year-old daughter is getting older, she wonders how she should raise her in a mixed religion-culture environment.

"I cherry-pick when it comes to my religion," Sheikh admits in the documentary, which was filmed over five years by Ottawa director and producer Hoda Elatawi of GAPC Entertainment.

"If my daughter told me she wanted me to wear the hijab, of course I would be supportive. But I really think it's all about your own personal interpretation of what's modest," she said.

Although she said she has seen negative comments about her experience posted underneath a recent news article about the documentary, she doesn't think the film will evoke stereotypes against Muslims.

"If somebody watches the film and if that's the only thing that they take away from the film — that this community is more diverse than I thought — I think that would be a huge success," she said.

Muneeza in the Middle premieres Wednesday at 9 p.m. on the CBC's documentary channel. JOE LOFARO/METRO

Muneeza in the Middle follows the life of Toronto lawyer Muneeza Sheikh, who struggles with her Muslim identity in Canada. CONTRIBUTED

New interim Ottawa Board of Health chair Shad Qadri and Medical Officer of Health Dr. Isra Levy pore over the numbers at Monday's budget meeting. The balanced draft budget tabled by Ottawa Public Health will depend on $800,000 in cuts. STEVE COLLINS/METRO

Cuts needed to balance Public Health's budget

Proposal. Measures include elimination of seven full-time positions and funding for AIDS hotline

STEVE COLLINS
ottawa@metronews.ca

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) tabled a balanced draft budget for 2015 on Monday night, but getting there depends on $800,000 in program and staff cuts, including the elimination of seven full-time equivalent positions.

Of the $56.4-million proposed budget, $12.9 million will come from the city, with the rest coming from the province and other sources.

The planned job cuts, staff said, are to come from attrition and by not filling some already-vacant positions. Among the programs hit with reductions will be phone services for new mothers and funding for another $440,000 in one-time projects. An AIDS hotline will also cease.

Health inspections for "high-risk" businesses such as tattoo and piercing shops will be increased by $150,000, and $50,000 will be set aside for the city's share of one-time projects, including food inspections at special events, expansion of a peer overdose-prevention program and urban aboriginal health programs.

The budget will require a 1.2 per cent increase from the city and assumes two per cent more of the budget will be forthcoming from the province than they contributed last year for cost-shared programs. Public Health staff said that Ottawa already receives the lowest per-capita provincial funding for shared programs in Ontario and it isn't keeping pace with costs.

The draft budget report says OPH "faces significant long-term funding shortfalls due to inflationary compensation pressures, funding which is not keeping up with growth in population and service demands and the requirement to fund the replacement of obsolete information-technology applications that support clinical care and community services."

The draft budget goes to council Feb. 4.

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University of Ottawa students Morgan Walz, left, and Ilia Kosnevitch chow down on maple taffy on Monday during the school's eighth annual Snow Festival. LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

U of O Snow Fest draws in students

Celebration. Maple taffy, Beavertails handed out at the event

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If there's any way to lure a university student to an event, it's through free food.

And so the lines were long at the University of Ottawa on Monday for the eighth annual Snow Festival, as dozens of students waited for Beavertails and maple taffy, on the house.

"We do this every year for the students, first, and to have fun on campus," said Alexandre Boileau, marketing and communications officer with the school.

A horse-drawn carriage around campus and ice sculptures — including one of a Gee-Gees logo — marked the first of the five-day event.

The rest of the week will include line dancing and country music (it's country-themed), a sugar bush meal and free coffee.

Small groups of six to eight people will be brave enough to sleep in a teepee on Wednesday and Thursday nights. So far, about 50 people have applied.

The school hopes to draw 10,000 students and staff over the week — and they are dishing out 1,200 free Beavertails every day to help achieve that goal.

For more information, check out the University of Ottawa's website.

Follow Lucy Scholey on Twitter @MetroLucy

At a glance

- For those who are a bit more adventurous, you can sign up to spend the night under the stars in a teepee on Jan. 21 or 22.
- The university is calling it a "once-in-a-lifetime cultural experience."
- Space is extremely limited so sign up for a chance to win your spot. Sign up by sending an email to program@uOttawa.ca.

Quoted

"We do this every year for the students, first, and to have fun on campus."

Alexandre Boileau, marketing and communications officer with the University of Ottawa

Winter

Flu, not frostbite, causing biggest seasonal health problems: Official

Ottawa's medical officer of health says there have so far been no reports of serious injuries from the sometimes extreme cold this winter (and another cold weather advisory was issued for last night), but this year's flu season has been a particularly bad one, with hundreds of lab-confirmed cases.

"The problem we're seeing is that the H3N2 strain is indeed more aggressive and causing more severe illness and a significant number of institutional outbreaks," Dr. Isra Levy told a meeting of the Ottawa Board of Health Monday night. "And that situation is not being helped by the fact that the flu vaccine this year is proving to be less effective than usual."

About 100 people have been hospitalized since early December and 11 have died, he said, with the elderly as usual taking the brunt.

Area retirement and long term care facilities have been particularly hard-hit, with 60 recorded outbreaks resulting in about 950 cases of the flu, and 26 outbreaks of other respiratory infections.

The tough flu season has been a challenge for Ottawa public health staff, he said: "I do want to acknowledge the efforts of our team of inspectors, nurses and doctors who have been putting in those long hours."

STEVE COLLINS/METRO

On the web

For more local news, go to metronews.ca

U of O researcher debunks sex myths

Academia. Women want sex for the same reasons, no matter their orientation: Paper

SEAN MCKIBBON
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A University of Ottawa researcher has concluded women have casual sex for physical reasons and relationship sex for emotional and physical reasons.

D'uh, right?

Except it's not nearly so obvious a conclusion as the sexually liberated female characters on The Mindy Project or Sex and the City might lead one to believe, says Dr. Heather L. Armstrong — who, with Dr. Elke D. Reissing wrote the paper straightforwardly titled "Women's Motivations to Have Sex in Casual and Committed Relationships with Male and Female Partners."

"I think there is still an assumption among a lot of people that women are having casual sex because they want to trap a partner," said Armstrong.

But that's not the only stereotype her research challenges. Armstrong says she had written previously about bisexuality and LGBT women and wanted to look at differences in motivation.

"A lot of research about lesbian sexuality emphasized the importance of emotions and intimacy as being key to sexual satisfaction," said Armstrong. She wanted to see if the same held true for bisexual women and included straight women in the study as a control group.

But it turned out after surveying 510 women (361 reporting exclusively other-sex attraction and 149 reporting same-sex or bisexual attraction) the answers flew in the face of previous research. Motivations for having sex didn't differ, no matter the orientation.

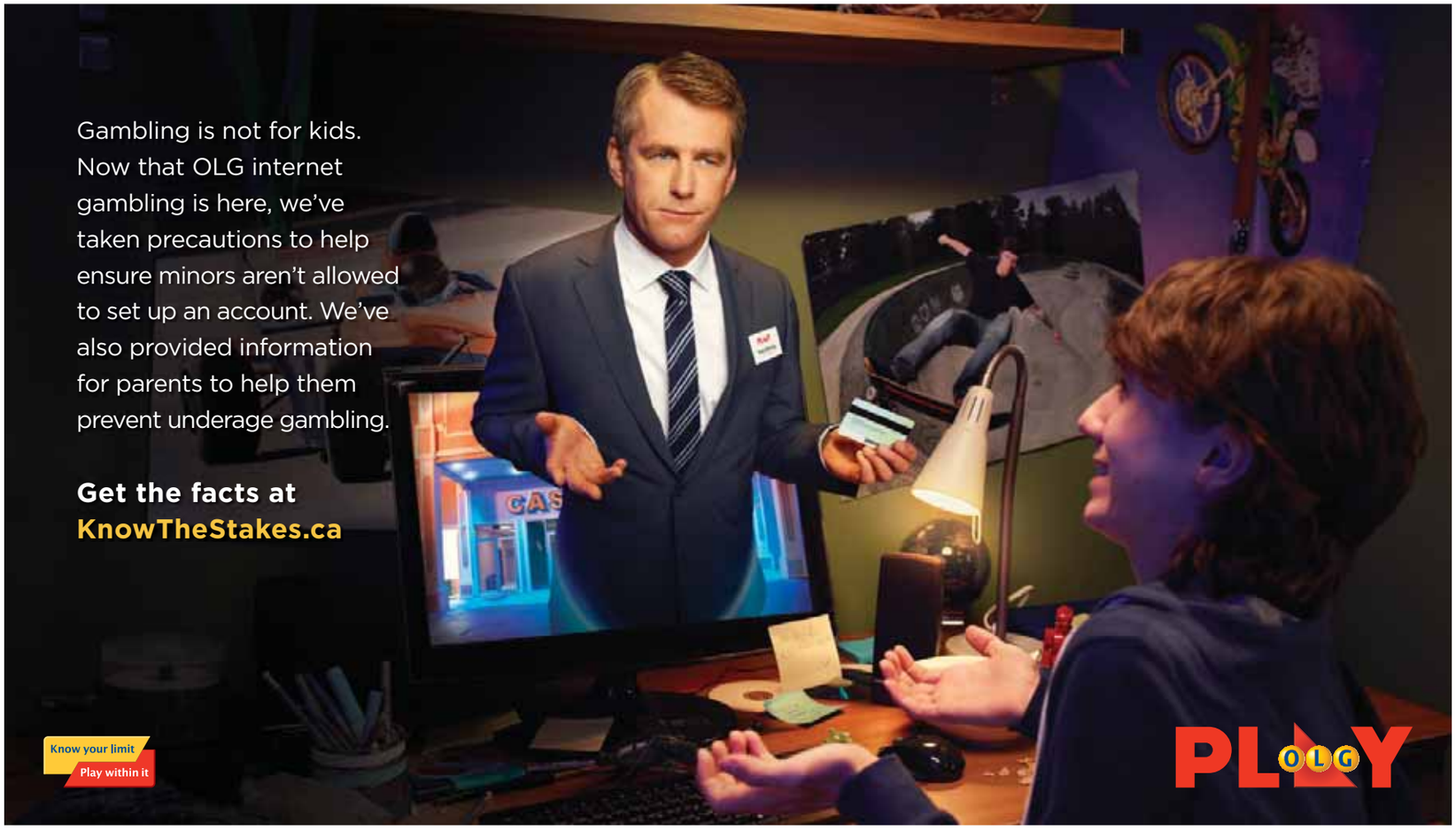
As a further control factor, people surveyed were also asked what would motivate them to have sex even in circumstances they'd never encountered. They were given a list of 140 possible reasons and asked whether they endorsed them and to rank them in terms of how strong the motivations were.

Armstrong says that even though the answers seem to flow with common assumptions now, there is a big difference between people assuming something and having actual data to back up what they think.

"A lot of people assume they know more about sex than they do," she said, noting her study was the first to look at motivations across orientations and to quiz respondents about both male and female sex partners.

Armstrong says she's now working on a similar study of men and adds research like hers can help inform public-policy decisions such as how to promote safe sex.

The Mindy Project's titular character makes no bones about stating why she wants to hook up with Mr. Right and Mr. Right Now. But pop-culture notions of what motivates a one-night stand vs. sex in a committed relationship have changed over time. Now, a University of Ottawa researcher says she has the data to back up some ideas and challenge others. CONTRIBUTED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Seven-month-old Étienne Blais has a rare life-threatening disease, a harsh form of Severe Combine Immune Deficiency, which can normally be cured only by bone marrow transplant. Without a perfect match and in financial difficulties, the family is asking for help to take him to California for an experimental treatment at UCLA. CONTRIBUTED

New therapy baby's chance

Barrhaven. Étienne's rare immune system disorder leads him to experimental gene implant treatment

LUCY SCHOLEY
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Like many seven-month-olds, Étienne Blais is learning how to crawl and has two bottom teeth poking out. He has big brown eyes and now laughs as easily as he sleeps through the night.

His parents, Monika and Pierre Blais, should be proudly parading their first baby outside of their Barrhaven home. But they can't.

Étienne has a rare life-threatening disease, a harsh form of Severe Combined Immune Deficiency (SCID), which means he has a vulnerable immune system.

Any flu virus or common cold would be dangerous — even potentially fatal — for the young Étienne.

That means the Blais family has been in near-isolation for the past seven months.

Neither parent has been able to work for fear of bringing home anything contagious.

Something as small as a trip to the grocery store is well-planned, with disinfectant wipes handy.

Even Étienne's grandparents met him only recently, wearing face masks.

Otherwise the family has been disconnected from friends and co-workers.

"We had all these plans of what we were going to do with the baby when he got here," said Pierre Blais.

"We were going to go on hikes and we were going to take him to the farmer's market."

Étienne Blais's body is missing an enzyme crucial for fighting off toxic metabolites, according to his doctor at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), Dr. Anne Pham-Guy.

Étienne combats the toxins by getting injections twice a week, but Pham-Guy says the injections are just a temporary fix, they don't really do anything to counter SCID itself.

A bone marrow transplant from a sibling is what is normally required to actually cure SCID. Unfortunately, Étienne is an only child and another match hasn't been found.

An experimental option may prove hopeful for Étienne: gene therapy. The technique consists of doctors implanting the "correct" gene into Blais's bone marrow. While the procedure is still in the research phase, it looks promising for cases such as Étienne's, said Pham-Guy.

"We're hoping that, if this works well, that he will live a completely normal life. But it's too early to say," she said.

The Blais family is travelling across the continent for Étienne to get the new treatment at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in April.

In need of financial help, the family has set up a crowd-funding campaign at www.babyetienne.com.

In the meantime, the family has learned to adjust, said Pierre Blais.

"As much as it is hard to live on the limited income that we're on now, it's still nice to have so much time with him; see him develop, see him crawl and see him learn to sit."

Quoted

"We're hoping that, if this works well, that he will live a completely normal life. But it's too early to say."

CHEO's Dr. Anne Pham-Guy

In numbers

18

To date, 18 children with SCID have been cured of the disease after receiving the therapy in clinical trials at UCLA and the National Institutes of Health, according to UCLA.

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Luka Magnotta

Appeal filed over guilty conviction

Luka Rocco Magnotta has filed an appeal of his conviction on five charges last month, including the first-degree murder of Chinese student Jun Lin.

Documents made public by the Quebec Court of Appeal today outline a number of reasons for Magnotta's decision to seek a new trial. After lengthy proceedings, jurors found him guilty last month of first-degree murder and four other charges in Lin's 2012 slaying.

The documents filed by Toronto-based lawyer Luc Leclair state the trial judge erred in a number of instances. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Iraq

Canadian forces return fire at combatants

Canadian soldiers opened fire on enemy positions in Iraq over the last week in what a senior officer called an act of self-defence.

Brig.-Gen. Michael Rouleau, commander of special operations command, says the soldiers were visiting front-line positions with Iraqi forces when they came under mortar and machine-gun fire.

Rouleau says the Canadians used sniper fire and "neutralized" the enemy positions without taking any casualties.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Amateur hockey

League may ban weekend fans

The Vancouver Island Amateur Hockey Association is considering the "drastic measure" of banning all spectators at weekend minor hockey games in an effort to stop verbal harassment against on-ice officials.

In a recent memo to members, VIAHA president Jim Humphrey said verbal abuse against on-ice officials and players has become such a serious problem that the hockey association is considering a "spectator free weekend." A request for comment from the hockey association was not immediately returned Monday.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

He will be in a better place soon: Wife of gravely injured Mountie

RCMP. Family of wounded officer have begun to say goodbye

The wife of an RCMP officer shot in the head at a casino north of Edmonton broke down Monday as she spoke of saying goodbye to her gravely injured husband.

"We're saying our goodbyes today and then from there, he'll be in a better place," Shelly MacInnis-Wynn said at an evening news conference.

"Today's the day we say goodbye to Dave."

Const. David Wynn has been in hospital since he was gunned down early Saturday morning and was not expected to survive.

She thanked the RCMP, the city of St. Albert and people in Bridgewater, N.S., where Wynn worked as a paramedic before joining the Mounties.

Wynn's sister, Dawn Sephton, thanked the medical teams at two Edmonton hospitals for the care they gave her little brother.

"As a family I would ask you to continue to support and respect the RCMP and the phenomenal job that they do in the service of all Canadians," Sephton said.

The 42-year-old father of three was one of two officers shot at the Apex Casino in St. Albert as they investigated a stolen pickup truck.

The other officer, auxiliary Const. Derek Bond, was shot in the arm and torso and faces a long recovery.

The family's statement came as court and parole board documents revealed the violent criminal background of the shooter, who was found dead in a home not far from the scene.

The documents show that Shawn Rehn, 34, had a long history of assaults, weapons convictions, break-ins and drug use that stretched back to his teenage years in the mid 1990s.

"You are a dangerous person who has demonstrated blatant disregard toward the criminal justice system as well as lack of respect to the public in general," the Parole Board of Canada said when it denied Shawn Rehn day parole in 2006.

"Your crimes are continuous and increasing in seriousness and often resulted in serious psychological, emotional and financial harm to victims."

Shelly MacInnis-Wynn, left, wife of Const. David Wynn, and Wynn's sister, Dawn Siphon, give an update on his condition in Edmonton, Alta., on Monday. Const. Wynn was shot in the head at close range and is not expected to regain consciousness. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Six years later, before Rehn left jail on statutory release on different charges, the board said that his "reintegration potential is assessed as low."

He was rearrested in July 2013 with a fellow parolee who had convictions for armed robbery.

Police searched Rehn's car and found a crack pipe, pellet pistol and knives.

The parole board rebuked Rehn for ignoring bans on having firearms.

"When you are in possession of weapons, the public is at serious risk of harm from you, as your past offending demonstrates," wrote the board the following September.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dalhousie. Student not treated fairly, lawyer says

A member of a Facebook group accused of posting hateful comments about female members of Dalhousie University's dentistry school blew the whistle on the classmates who made the remarks, but has been treated unfairly by the school, the man's lawyer said Monday.

Bruce MacIntosh is representing Ryan Millet, a fourth-year dentistry student and one of the 13 members of the now defunct Class of DDS 2015 Gentlemen on Facebook group.

MacIntosh said in a statement provided to The Canadian Press that Millet took a stand against posts he deemed offensive and encouraged other group members to remove them, but was sanctioned by Dalhousie University.

He criticized the way the school handled the matter, saying the students were pushed into accepting punishment without due diligence.

"No one stopped to interview the victims, or the alleged perpetrators, to determine which students were truly culpable," he said.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada stands with Israel as Palestinians pursue war crimes charges

جون بيرد وزير خارجية كندا
عليك ان تخجل من موقفك المنحاز لاسرائيل
You ..The Canadian John Byrd
You should be ashamed
We do not like to see you in our country

A Palestinian protester holds a poster on Sunday with a photo of Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird during Baird's meeting with Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki in the West Bank city of Ramallah.
NASSER NASSER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird reaffirmed Canada's opposition Monday to a Palestinian attempt to pursue war crimes charges against Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Speaking in Jerusalem, Baird said the Palestinians "made a huge mistake" by going to the ICC, an United Nations institution that Canada played a lead role in creating in the 1990s.

Baird met Monday with Israeli officials as part of his five-day visit to the region. Prior to meeting Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon, he said the Palestinians crossed a "red line" and that he "communicated that in no uncertain terms" to Palestinian leaders a day earlier.

Israel will be able to count on Canada's firm support in opposing any ICC action against the country, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said as he formally welcomed Baird before their meeting.

"You know that it's a travesty of justice to haul Israel to the dock in The Hague, and you know that the entire system of international law could unravel because of this travesty," Netanyahu said.

"I thank you for your support and for your moral leadership, and I pledge this to you: Israel will not have its hand tied by a politicized ICC."

Baird replied that "the great struggle of our generation is terrorism" — one Israel faces on the front lines.

"And as I've said before, Canada doesn't stand behind Israel; we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with it."

As Baird arrived in Israel Friday, the ICC's prosecutor announced she was beginning a preliminary investigation that could clear the way to a full scale investigation into possible war crimes in the Palestinian territories, a development that could have serious implications for both sides of the Middle East conflict.
THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Rome Statute

The Rome Statute is the international treaty that led to the creation of the ICC, giving it jurisdiction over war crimes.

- On Dec. 31 Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas signed the documents needed to accede to the treaty.

Argentina. Prosecutor who accused president dies

Argentina's government said Monday there was no indication that anybody else was involved in the death of a prosecutor who had accused President Cristina Fernandez of shielding Iranian suspects in the nation's deadliest terror attack — a declaration sure to be closely scrutinized.

Alberto Nisman, who had been investigating the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people, was found in the bathroom of his apartment late Sunday, hours before he was to testify in a Congressional hearing about the case.

Investigating prosecutor Viviana Fein said the preliminary autopsy found "no intervention" of others in Nisman's death.

However, Fein would not rule out the possibility that Nisman was "induced" to suicide, because the gun was not his.

"The firearm belonged to a collaborator of Nisman," Fein said. According to the autopsy, Nisman had a bullet entry-wound on the right side of his head but there was no exit wound. His body was found inside the bathroom, blocking the door, which was locked from the inside, Fein said.

The findings left more questions than answers about the death, which came only five days after Nisman accused Fernandez and other officials of reaching a deal with Iran that shielded some officials from possible punishment for the attack

Nisman was heavily guarded by police because he had received threats. Late Sunday, the agents protecting him alerted their superiors that he wasn't answering phone calls, according to a Security Ministry statement. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sea of Cortez. Mexico to patrol waters with drones

Mexico is planning to use drones to patrol the upper Sea of Cortez to combat illegal fishing and save the critically endangered vaquita marina, the world's smallest porpoise.

Assistant environmental prosecutor Alejandro del Mazo said Monday his agency has conducted tests of unmanned aircraft flights in co-operation with the Mexican Navy.

Del Mazo says he hopes to have three drones patrolling the vaquita's habitat in coming months. Also known as the Gulf of California, it is the only place vaquitas are found.

"We are considering the use of advanced technology, because drones would allow us to have permanent aerial patrols in the area and be able to react much more efficiently and quickly," Del Mazo said.

Fewer than 100 of the shy, elusive porpoises remain. The vaquita is threatened by illegal gillnet fishing for totoaba, a large fish whose swim bladder is prized by chefs in China.

In December, Mexican authorities proposed a $37 million plan to ban gillnet fishing in about half of the upper Gulf. The plan is up for mandatory public consultation, and could be implemented in March. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

$65K stolen

Widow of man killed in British terror attack jailed

The widow of a man killed in the 2005 terrorist attacks on the London transportation system has been jailed for stealing money from the compensation fund intended for her son.

Louise Gray was sentenced Monday to two years and eight months in prison after stealing 43,000 pounds ($65,000 US) from her son Adam, who was 11 when his father was killed. Gray had earlier pleaded guilty to the theft. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

London

Parents shocked by birthday bill

It was not what Derek Nash expected to find in his five-year-old's school bag: A bill demanding a "no-show fee" for another child's birthday party. Nash said the bill from another parent sought 15.95 pounds ($24 US) because his son Alex had not attended the party at a ski centre. Nash told the BBC he had initially accepted the invitation, but realized Alex was supposed to visit his grandparents. He said he did not have contact details to let the other family know. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kenyan students hold up a placard brought by activists during a demonstration Monday against the removal of their school's playground at the Langata Road Primary School in Nairobi. Police tear-gassed students at the demonstration, prompting the suspension of the officer in charge at the scene. BRIAN INGANGA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kenyan police use tear gas on schoolchildren

Nairobi. Students at Lengata Road Primary School were demonstrating against the removal of their playground

Quoted

"This is brutality beyond words and greed beyond description."

Raila Odinga, opposition leader

Kenyan police Monday tear-gassed schoolchildren demonstrating against the removal of their school's playground, which allegedly has been taken over by a powerful politician, said a Kenyan human rights activist.

The students from Langata Road Primary School were in the front line of people pulling down a wall erected around the playground which has been acquired by a private developer said to be a powerful politician, said Boniface Mwangi. Primary school children in Kenya are usually between six and 14 years of age.

"The governor, the senator and other government officials are all scared of the politician; they cannot do anything to stop the playground from the being taken," Mwangi said.

Television footage showed children, some being carried away, writhing in pain, screaming and choking because of the tear gas. Police officers later brought dogs to the playground.

Acting police Chief Samuel Arachi said he had suspended the police officer who was in charge at the scene of the protest.

In such an incident tear gas shouldn't have been used because the protests were not violent, Arachi said. He said five people have been arrested; three for vandalism and two for incitement.

"We will never allow officers to use force — not only on any citizen (but) more so on children, whether in a demonstration or otherwise," he said.

Elijah Mwangi, who was in charge of the police officers at the school, said he was following orders.

Opposition politician Eliud Owalo said last week that the playground had been taken over to construct a parking lot for the politician's hotel adjacent to the school.

"This is brutality beyond words and greed beyond description," said opposition leader Raila Odinga. "It is difficult to believe that police can actually deploy against primary school children and lob tear gas at them to defend a land-grabber.

"This image of a nation determined to steal forcefully from its own children cannot be what we aspire to. It cannot be the legacy we want to bequeath the children."

Allegations of land seizures by Kenyan officials has become a controversial issue in the country. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

European police review weapons to counter terror

One victim was a young policewoman, unarmed on the outskirts of Paris and felled by an assault rifle. Her partner, also without weapons, could do nothing to stop the gunman.

Another victim was a first-responder with a sidearm, rushing to the Charlie Hebdo offices, where a pair of masked men with high-powered weapons had opened fire on an editorial meeting. Among their primary targets: the armed police bodyguard inside the room.

With the deaths of the three French officers during three days of terror in the Paris region and the suggestion of a plot in Belgium to kill police, European law enforcement agencies are rethinking how — and how many — police should be armed.

Scotland Yard said Sunday it was increasing the deployment of officers allowed to carry firearms in Britain, where many cling to the image of the unarmed "bobby."

In Belgium, where officials say a terror network was plotting to attack police, officers are again permitted to take their service weapons home.

On Monday, French law enforcement officials demanding heavier weapons, protective gear and a bolstered intelligence apparatus, met with top officials from the Interior Ministry.

Among the most horrific images from the Paris attacks was the death of police officer Ahmed Merabet, who can be seen on eyewitness video lying wounded on the pavement as a gunman approaches and fires a final bullet into his head. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ex-Korean Air exec pleads not guilty in nut rage case

Aviation safety. Cho Hyun-ah, airline chairman's daughter, has been in custody since Dec. 30, faces up to 15 years in prison

The former Korean Air executive famous for an inflight tantrum over macadamia nuts pleaded not guilty Monday to violating aviation safety law and hindering a government investigation.

Lawyers for Cho Hyun-ah did not dispute the major elements of the prosecutor's account of events on Dec. 5 when Cho forced a Korean Air jet to return to the gate. Instead, they are focusing on a technical rebuttal.

Prosecutors accused her of forcing a flight to change its route, which was the most serious charge with a maximum prison sentence of 10 years. The three other charges Cho faces are the use of violence against flight crew, hindering a government probe and forcing the flight's purser off the plane.

Cho's attorney Yu Seungnam told a panel of three judges that the flight had moved only 17 metres from the gate at New York's John F. Kennedy airport before it returned, which did not amount to a forced change of an aviation route.

Cho admitted using violence against one flight attendant in first class by pushing her shoulder and throwing an object at her, but denied that she poked the hands of chief flight attendant Park Chang-jin with a book. Yu argued that those acts did not amount to threatening safety on the flight.

Cho spent most of the first day of her trial Monday with her head lowered and hair covering her face.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cho Hyun-ah, the former Korean Air executive who made headlines after an inflight tantrum over macadamia nuts, pleaded not guilty Monday to violating aviation safety law and three other charges. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Law. Beastie Boys seek $2.4M for fees and costs

The Beastie Boys want to force the maker of Monster Energy drink to pay nearly $2.4 million US in legal fees and costs so the rappers' $1.7 million US jury award is not dwarfed by expenses in a copyright violation case, lawyers say.

A Manhattan federal court jury awarded the group most of the $2 million US it requested at a June trial, but that was not enough to cover costs that lawyers said were worsened by the actions of the California-based Monster Energy Co., the musicians' lawyers said in papers filed in Manhattan federal court.

They said more than two years of litigation punctuated by Monster's failure to engage in good-faith negotiations, an eight-day trial and Monster's effort to overturn the verdict ran up the legal bill.

Monster had admitted wrongly using the group's songs in a video that was online for five weeks. But the beverage maker said at trial it should owe no more than $125,000 US.

The Beastie Boys, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2012, have turned out four No. 1 albums and sold more than 40 million records.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 83.70¢ (+0.14¢)

TSX 14,312.50 (+3.09)

OIL $48.69 US (+$2.44)

GOLD $1,276.90 US (+$12.10)

Natural gas: Closed.
Dow Jones: Closed.

Richest 1% soon wealthier than rest of world combined: Oxfam

The richest one per cent of the population will own more than half the world's wealth by 2016, Oxfam International said in a report released as the World Economic Forum begins in Davos, Switzerland.

Oxfam said the world's richest people saw their share of wealth jump to 48 per cent last year from 44 per cent in 2009. Rising inequality is holding back the fight against global poverty as the world's biggest companies lobby the U.S. and European Union for beneficial tax changes at a time when average taxpayers are still paying the bill for the financial crisis, Oxfam said.

"Do we really want to live in a world where the one per cent own more than the rest of us combined?" Winnie Byanyima, Oxfam's executive director, said in a statement.

The health-care and financial services industries spent almost $900 million US to lobby the U.S. government for favourable legislation in 2013, and more than $200 million US was spent on lobbying in the EU, Oxfam said. At the same time, one in nine people don't have enough to eat and more than a billion people live on less than $1.25 US a day, Oxfam officials said.

The charity is calling for a crackdown on tax avoidance by corporations and rich people, with increased investment in health and education. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Online retail

Amazon primed to get into the movie business

Amazon Studios said Monday that it will significantly expand into movie production by acquiring films for theatrical release and early-window streaming through its Amazon Prime Instant Video service. A key aim is to get movies to its website four to eight weeks after theatrical release instead of the current three months.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Employment

German telecom vet to head Rogers consumer division

Rogers Communications Inc. is hiring Dirk Woessner, a senior executive of Germany's largest telecommunications company, Deutsche Telecom, to be president of the company's consumer business unit.

At Rogers, Woessner will be responsible for product development and sales operations.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Swiss laws

Banker found guilty of passing secrets to WikiLeaks

A former private banker was found guilty Monday of breaking Switzerland's strict secrecy laws by passing confidential client data to WikiLeaks in 2007.

Rudolf Elmer claims he was trying to expose rich tax evaders banking with his former employer, Julius Baer, which fired him in 2002. He was fined the equivalent of $23,000.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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VOICES

GIMME TRANSIT SHELTER

In a city with winters this cold and where a bus might not show up for half an hour, three-sided transit waiting areas are a big problem

YOUR RIDE
Kathryn Hunt

"When is a shelter not a shelter?" Joe Petrie asked me.

"When it's on Rideau Street."

Mr. Petrie is the president of the Seniors Association of Sandy Hill, and he's bewildered by recent decisions about bus shelters. New shelters have gone in all along Rideau Street from Dalhousie to Charlotte.

Fifteen of them, in fact, at more than $15,000 each (not counting the concrete platforms they stand on). Many of the old shelters had nowhere for people to sit. Petrie complained to city council and OC Transpo that the many seniors using the bus routes along Rideau needed to have somewhere to sit down.

Now, he says, the new ones might have seats — but where the old structures had a partial Plexiglas partition shielding those waiting on Rideau, these new ones are open to the elements on one side, allowing snow and cold wind (and the occasional blast of slush from underneath tires) into the shelter.

The open side alternates from shelter to shelter, sometimes facing the street, sometimes facing the sidewalk, with "no rhyme or reason."

When he asked around about it, he said he found that the three-sided structure was meant as a safety measure, though he doubts that a three-sided configuration is much safer than the old, partially enclosed format.

To Petrie — and no doubt to many transit riders in the area — the decisions over what type of station to put where seem arbitrary.

DO YOU HAVE A TRANSIT IDEA?
Shoot us an email:
ottawa@metronews.ca

Some of the bus stops on Rideau don't have any shelter at all.

At the stop below his apartment, he says, he watches people duck inside a nearby phone booth, which has enough space for two to huddle against the wind.

"The first two at the stop luck out," he says.

This can also cause people to use the doorways of nearby shops, or even the establishments themselves, as a place to wait for their bus.

Petrie's spoken about this to the manager of the Second Cup at Rideau and Dalhousie, where there were once seats at the bus stop. Since their removal, people have been going inside the Second Cup to wait for buses.

When Petrie inquired with the city, he was told that the seats were impeding snow removal.

"It's not right. If people miss the bus on weekends, it's 30 minutes-plus where they're huddled at the stops, not protected from the elements."

Kathryn Hunt @k8thek8 is a writer, editor of Centretown BUZZ, storyteller, poet, cycling blogger, rock climber, mysterious techno vixen (confirmed) and geek. Not necessarily in that order. You can read her cycling blog at theincidentalcyclist.blogspot.ca.

Two transit users stand inside one of the not-so-shelter-affording waiting areas on Rideau Street. JOE LOFARO/METRO

We're surpassing the limits of our planetary boundaries — it's really time Canada goes green

STEPHANIE ORFORD
readers@metronews.ca

It sounds like the opening of a disaster movie: Humans have broken four of the planet's nine planetary boundaries and a new era of potentially devastating climate change has begun.

Sadly, it's not. This was a sobering finding published last Thursday by climate scientists in the journal Science.

The researchers investigated nine key environmental factors or "planetary boundaries." Each has an upper limit beyond which climate effects are unpredictable and potentially dangerous for human civilization as we know it.

According to the study, since industrialization in the early 20th century, human activities have broken the boundaries when it comes to levels of extinction, deforestation, atmospheric carbon dioxide, and nitrogen and phosphorous pollution from fertilizer. Lake Erie's "dead zone," an area choked up with algae, is the direct result of fertilizer runoff.

As Canadians, we tend to see ourselves as pretty green. Public opinion in Canada has shifted in favour of all things environmentally friendly.

Canadians actively seek out "green" products, services and lifestyles. Environmentalism is no longer for fringe groups.

It's the default.

But as a supposedly progressive, developed country, Canada has been embarrassingly, shockingly unresponsive to climate change reform. A report released in 2013 ranked Canada 55 out of 58 in its efforts to rein in greenhouse gas emissions.

The economy is not an excuse. With dramatically low worldwide oil prices threatening a traditional keystone of Canada's economy, there's no better time to diversify into renewable energy and other green innovations. Clean, energy-efficient technologies such as solar panels are plunging in cost and rocketing in efficiency, making them ripe to take off with consumers as they reach parity with more polluting technologies.

Humanity has had it real good for the past 11,700 years, an epoch known as the Holocene period. Civilizations sprouted spontaneously across the world and got busy at breakneck speed, in geological terms, developing agriculture, organized societies, science — civilization as we know it. The researchers established the "planetary boundaries" based on these conditions.

But now we're wearing out our protective bubble. Researchers don't know what will happen as we exceed the nine boundaries, but they warn that if we maintain our current trajectory, Earth "is likely to be much less hospitable to the development of human societies."

Canada needs to follow the lead of its citizens and set an example in implementing green policies. The government should enthusiastically fund research, subsidize environmentally forward-thinking companies and technologies and create opportunities for green investment and innovation.

Give us ways to help the planet within our means, and we'll embrace them.

Stephanie Orford is a writer based in Vancouver.

metro

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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Jennifer Aniston ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Wait, Jennifer Aniston is now on Team Angelina?

Jennifer Aniston and Angelina Jolie both attended the Critics Choice Awards last week — in the same room and everything — and the world did not slip into biblical levels of chaos.

In fact, Aniston even went on record about their infamous feud that started when Brad Pitt left the Friends star and shacked up with the Unbroken director.

"I think that's slowly coming to an end, I really do," Aniston told Entertainment Tonight at the event. "(Unbroken) is so beautiful and wonderful, and she did such a gorgeous job, and I think it's time people stop with that petty B.S. and start celebrating great work and stop with the petty kind of silliness … It's just tiresome and old. It's like an old leather shoe."

OK, two things, Ms Aniston: One, some of us like old leather shoes. The thing about leather is the more broken-in it gets, the better. I have a pair, in fact, that get more comfortable each time I wear them. So maybe not the best metaphor.

And, two, while I'm all for the high-minded moving on you suggest, some of us — ahem — would be out of a job without all the petty B.S. and silliness in the world.

Huckabee backtracks on calling Jay-Z a pimp

That loveable scamp Mike Huckabee has a problem with Jay-Z and Beyoncé — and with the First Family enjoying their music.

"How can it be that the Obamas let Sasha and Malia listen to that? Apparently they do," he writes in God, Guns, Grits and Gravy, his adorably titled new memoir that apparently does more than list things that will lead to an early death.

"Jay-Z is a very shrewd businessman, but I do wonder: Does it occur to him that he is arguably crossing the line from husband to pimp by exploiting his wife as a sex object?"

While he's busy backtracking, insisting that he thinks Beyoncé is "a wonderful talent" who doesn't have to degrade herself by introducing anything remotely sexual into her act, I would like to point him to numerous examples from Jay-Z's work suggesting he is in fact just fine with being a pimp. Although I think he's using the word differently.

Jay-Z and Beyoncé

Kendall Jenner's words are wise beyond her years

If you find yourself uttering that old chestnut, "Kids today, they grow up so fast," then you might actually be onto something.

At least according to professional young person Kendall Jenner. The 19-year-old reality star — and, I guess, model or something — writes in a new column for the Wall Street Journal's magazine, "I feel like I grew up too fast a long time ago."

Let all the particulars of that sentence sink in for a moment. The "a long time ago" part, the fact that it's in WSJ magazine, the fact that she wrote a column for said magazine. I'll understand if you just want to go back to bed.

Kendall Jenner

Black Eyed Peas

Black Eyed Peas are back! Consider yourself warned

Don't complain later that you weren't warned.

Reigning pop homogenizers the Black Eyed Peas are getting back together for another album and another tour, and there's nothing we can do about it.

"They have already started working on their new material and will be doing a tour together following the release of their first album," a source tells Radar Online.

"All of the band members are expected to return," including Fergie, will.i.am and the other two.

Sorry Billy, but gay sex *is* an 'everyday kind of thing'

Billy Crystal has a bone to pick with shows that feature scenes of a homosexual nature, complaining to the Television Critics Association that they're not "to his taste."

"Sometimes I think, 'Ah, that's too much for me.' Sometimes it's just pushing it a little too far for my taste — and I'm not going to reveal to you which ones they are."

Sure, but we can guess.

"I hope people don't abuse it and shove it in our face to the point where it feels like an everyday kind of thing," he added.

Listen, Billy, if you're going to employ neo-conservative dog whistles in your responses, the correct phrasing is "shove it down our throats," not "shove it in our faces."

And as far as gay scenes feeling like "an everyday kind of thing"? That's sort of the point.

Billy Crystal

At the start of his U.S. tour, Murs has Never Been Better

Interview. Singer who first found fame on The X Factor is trying to stretch his U.K. success across the pond

Olly Murs kicks off his U.S. tour with a cheer from the top of the Empire State Building. AFP FILE PHOTO

After his latest album debuted at number one in his native Britain, pop singer Olly Murs has set his sights on the United States and found some quirks.

Among them, Americans are more prone to tossing things on stage.

"Fans all scream and shout. The American fans, I find, they throw a lot more phones and other objects at me on stage, which was quite strange. They all wanted pictures and selfies and things like that," Murs said.

Murs, a former call centre worker from the town of Witham in Essex, became an overnight celebrity in 2009 when he appeared on the talent show The X Factor to perform a spirited cover of Stevie Wonder's Superstition.

His catchy pop hooks — and pelvis-gyrating dance moves — have helped him to sell more than 10 million copies and to pack arenas in Britain.

But his following in the United States has been considerably more modest than, say, One Direction, the boy band who became global sensations through The X Factor the year after Murs performed and later invited Murs as an opening act in North America.

Murs, speaking as he relished a sweeping view of New York from the top of the Empire State Building, said the goal of any artist was to "get your music across the world to as many people as you can."

"I think you just want to beat what you did before, even if it's only by one copy," he said.

For his fourth studio album, Never Been Better, Murs has embarked on a U.S. promotion campaign that included a performance on the morning television Today show on Thursday.

In an increasingly rare move in a globalized and Internet-driven music industry, Never Been Better is coming out in the United States, the world's largest music market, on March 10 — more than three months after it debuted at number one in Britain.

Never Been Better, which according to Murs' label has cracked the Top 10 in 31 countries, shows the singer co-writing more of his own music.

From call centre to celebrity

Olly Murs has gone from working in a call centre to touring across countries promoting his music. "It's been an amazing turnaround in my life in the past five, six years — I'm being escorted around the Empire State Building!" he says.

The opening track, Wrapped Up, is a bright dance tune with a funk rhythm and a cameo by U.S. rapper Travie McCoy. The album also features a ballad, Up, with another American star, the singer and former child actress Demi Lovato.

His upbeat music appears to be in line with his persona; his autobiography on his brief career is entitled Happy Days.

But the 30-year-old acknowledged that he has not been entirely free of self-doubt.

"It was a big change for me from working at a call centre to then, eight months later, I've got all these crazy things happening — new singles and a new album," he said.

He insisted that accounts of a drinking problem were exaggerated and that there was only around one month when he fell into a funk. "We all have difficult months. I don't dwell too much on it," he said. "I think it was more of a way to open my eyes, really, to what was going on around me and my career. I needed to sort it out and I did."

AFP

Profile

Courtney Love's big comeback

SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

Alan Cross and Courtney Love
ANDREA CRAWFORD

There's a chance you saw Courtney Love act before you heard her sing. If you think back to the opening scene of Alex Cox's Sid and Nancy in 1986, Courtney was the punk crying over Nancy's body as it was removed from the Chelsea Hotel.

For a while, Ms. Cobain straddled the worlds of acting and alt-rock. There were a few roles during the grunge years (Basquiat, 200 Cigarettes) before she scored big, starring opposite Woody Harrelson in The People vs. Larry Flynt, a performance that earned her a Golden Globe. Then came another acclaimed performance with Jim Carrey as Andy Kaufman's girlfriend in Man on the Moon. By the end of the century, Love was in danger of becoming a genuine Serious Actor.™

But then things went off the rails. Far off. Drug problems, family issues, legal woes, a failed solo music career, financial difficulties and oodles of bad press saw Courtney spiral down into a pretty dark place. Now, though, her career prospects look brighter than they have at any point in this millennium. The big comeback began with a four-episode appearance in Sons of Anarchy as a schoolteacher (!) named Ms. Harrison. Then earlier this month, Courtney co-starred in an off-Broadway rock opera called Kansas City Choir Boy as part of a festival called Prototype. She played Athena, a Midwestern girl who chases her dream of being a star in New York only to end up murdered. Todd Almond, the production's composer, plays her abandoned and anguished boyfriend.

Roughly based on The Odyssey (there's even a chorus of six sirens), Almond told me "I was working on another show in Kansas City when a woman from the cast disappeared and was later found dead in New York. I kept thinking about that until it turned into Choir Boy."

So how did he land Courtney as a co-star? "My husband is Courtney's manager. He suggested it."

This past Saturday, I flew to New York for the final performance of KCCB and I can attest that it deserved all the good reviews it received. Courtney was electric. Todd Almond should be a star.

And there's more. In two weeks, we'll see Courtney in a recurring role as Elle Dallas on Empire, the record industry soap opera that's been a big hit for Fox. Her role? A bad-behaving druggy diva rock star. Courtney smiled at me. "Inspired casting, don't you think?"

Panda Bear's music making talent is anything but rare

New record. Musician's recent successes have given him the confidence to create even wilder fare

Noah Lennox's show-stealing collaboration with Daft Punk on the melancholy Doin' It Right won him more than a Grammy.

It also gave the man known as Panda Bear validation — affirmation that he apparently still needed even with scores of sterling reviews to his name since debuting as a solo artist in 2004, or as a member of oblique noise-makers Animal Collective.

"More than anything, I felt like it reinforced the idea that the stuff I was making could work and could have some power to it," Lennox said in a telephone interview from New York.

"More than anything, it gave me confidence that it resonated with those guys. It was a proof of concept."

Emboldened, Lennox has just released his grimiest and grooviest record yet in Panda Bear Meets the Grim Reaper.

It's generally agreed that Lennox's masterpiece was 2007's Person Pitch, a record built on his celestial vocal harmonies and a dense bedrock of found sounds. With 2011's Tomboy, he defiantly pared back and submitted to more traditional song structures.

The new record refines that approach, combining the hardest-hitting rhythms of Lennox's solo career with challenging degrees of discord.

Even when he wrote a more-or-less straightforward pop song — infectious lead single Mr. Noah — he felt compelled to add some obscuring filters.

"I feel like more songs started in that zone, more like forceful and aggressive, and in the studio got toned down a bit — or washed out, or blurred," he said.

Once again, his lyrics are more emotionally evocative than literally meaningful, but several music critics — notably in a thoughtful Pitchfork review — have sniffed out a narrative.

A father of two in his adopted hometown of Lisbon, Lennox is presumed to be writing about the weight of responsibility that comes with being a provider.

While he says no interpretation is wrong, he sounds a bit disappointed at that review.

"I really didn't want to do something where I felt like I was writing a diary or a journal or telling stories about my life," said Lennox, 36. "It was a considerable effort to not feel like I was talking about myself.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Noah Lennox, a.k.a. Panda Bear
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Take the embarrassment out of a new fitness routine

Group workouts. You may be new, but you don't have to feel like a newbie

EVA KIS
Metro in NYC

One of the keys to enjoying group exercise is choosing a class you feel passionate about. ISTOCK

It's a good time to make a fitness resolution, with an explosion of boutique studios offering more ways to work out than ever.

And, you may think, just as many ways to embarrass yourself with unfamiliar equipment, complicated routines and the a lack of gymnast flexibility.

Many people miss out on great fitness classes because they feel intimidated, and celebrity trainer Simone De La Rue doesn't want that to happen. In addition to clients like Anne Hathaway and Naomi Watts, the Australian also has Body By Simone studios in L.A. and Manhattan — and knows that everyone who walks through the door is a newbie in some way.

But exercising together is worth the initial hurdles: It's motivating, keeps you accountable and creates a community. "Group fitness has been around for years, and it works because you're feeding off the energy of other people," she says.

De La Rue shares how to start off on the right foot.

Get a sneak preview

Feeling intimidated is common, but you don't have to walk into a class totally unprepared.

"A lot of time people come and have a private session first to build up their confidence before they feel comfortable going into the class," says De La Rue.

Ask if the studio can offer you some one-on-one time with an instructor to preview the basic techniques and offer advice in private.

You're all there to sweat, not judge

"A lot of people even struggle looking at themselves in the mirror," says De La Rue.

The thing to remember is that you're the only one looking at you — everyone else is just as busy worrying about themselves.

So face yourself, acknowledge where you are and focus on learning the skills to build your confidence.

Discover your passion

The best class for you is the one you'll go back to.

De La Rue's passion is cardio dance: It's a link to her training as a ballerina and avoids the monotony of running and cycling.

"Dance is using your whole body and using your brain as well to work in coordination," she says. "It's creative, it's expressive, it's a joyous way of exercising."

Those words should describe how you feel doing whatever exercise you choose.

The hardest part is showing up, but if you're excited to get to it, then the rest is much easier.

Go to the right class

The newest exercise trend may not be for you, and there's always more than one kind of class to work the body parts you're concerned about.

If you're looking for cardio but are not coordinated, skip the dancing and go for the full-body class that works the same muscles.

"Pick something that's in your comfort zone to build up your strength and confidence," she says.

Marijuana

The high — minus the munchies

U.S. TV personality Bethenny Frankel could soon release her own line of marijuana that's been tweaked so that it won't give you the munchies.

The cannabis will be part of Frankel's Skinnygirl brand empire and will be available everywhere in the U.S. where recreational use of marijuana is allowed, according to US Weekly.

So far, this includes Alaska, Colorado, Oregon and Washington. Some states, like California, allow marijuana for medical purposes.

The entrepreneur had tweeted from Aspen, Colorado her delight in seeing marijuana widely available back in December.

After her 2005 appearance on The Apprentice: Martha Stewart, Frankel was selected to join the cast of The Real Housewives of New York City in 2008.

She launched Skinnygirl, a line of low-calorie cocktails, in 2011, later selling it to Fortune Brands' Beam Global.

She hosted Bethenny, her own talk show, until it was canceled in February 2014. AFP

Bethenny Frankel plans to release marijuana that won't give you munchies. JEWEL SAMAD/AFP

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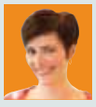
THIS WEEK: Come Relax in the Dental Chair!

Get in the game with an elegant venison dish

Theresa's tips

Secrets to cooking wild meats



NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

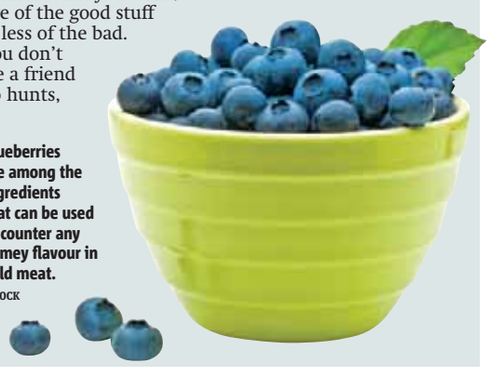
One of the key food trends this year is wild (or at least grass-fed) meats. Maybe that's due to interest in the paleo diet, or maybe it's a symptom of our collective culinary adventuring. But either way, you can't lose by broadening your horizons to include something new.

Game animals move and eat a more varied diet, which makes their meat leaner though sometimes tougher with a better fat profile. Corn-fed animals such as beef cattle tend to contain greater amounts of the more-inflammatory omega 6 and 9 fats, but grass-fed animals have more of the anti-inflammatory omega 3 fat.

That's what you want, more of the good stuff and less of the bad. If you don't have a friend who hunts, butcher shops are stocking more wild cuts and are wonderful sources of tips on how to prepare the unique proteins.

General rules include:

- beginners should chose loin cuts or rib cuts for quick-cook recipes that are more similar to traditional meats;
- game and grass-fed roasts require low and slow, moist cooking methods like braising and stewing;
- be sure your butcher has trimmed all silver skin and as much fat as possible, since game meat fat doesn't taste as good as beef fat and any "silver" is tough and virtually inedible;
- marinate to soften the texture and add flavour;
- don't be afraid to add a bit of butter or duck fat to the meat and/or sauces;
- generally, game meats require less cooking than beef;
- beat any gamey flavour with wild blueberries, juniper berries, thyme, red wine, rich broths, garlic or cream.



Blueberries are among the ingredients that can be used to counter any gamey flavour in wild meat. ISTOCK

Venison Medallions with Sautéed Apple Slices and Wild Blueberry Sauce.

Berries help create a sweet, juicy balance in this savoury dish

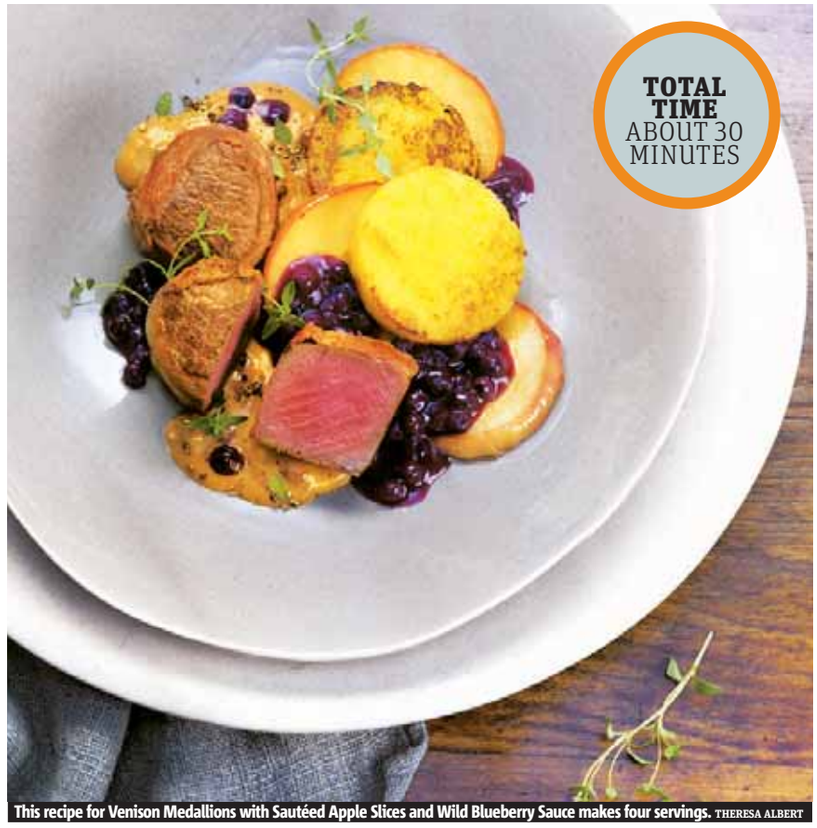
FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

Wild blueberries offer top-notch flavour and nutrients directly from the freezer in seconds. In this recipe, they complement the flavour of venison. But they also work well with pork tenderloin. The trick is to cook the sauce separately so that the deep blue-coloured nutrients don't discolour the meat. Think of them as a way to create a juicy, sweet balance in savoury dishes.

Ingredients

- 1/2 onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. butter
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup (240 ml) red wine
- 1 cup (240 ml) rich beef broth
- 3/4 cup (100 g) frozen wild blueberries
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) currant jelly
- 2 red apples
- 1 1/2 lbs (600 g) saddle of venison (or pork tenderloin)
- 1/2 bunch of thyme



This recipe for Venison Medallions with Sautéed Apple Slices and Wild Blueberry Sauce makes four servings. THERESA ALBERT

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.

2. Sauté onions and garlic in butter, season with salt and pepper and let simmer for 5 minutes. Add wine and beef broth and simmer for 2 minutes. Add frozen wild blueberries and currant jelly and simmer, stirring occasionally for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Core and slice apples, set aside.

3. Dab venison dry on paper towel and cut into 12 equally sized, thin medallions. Heat 1 tbsp. butter in skillet. Sear medallions on all sides 3-4 minutes and season with salt and pepper.

4. Remove medallions from pan and place in oven until sauce is finished. Add apples to pan with a splash of water or wine if needed.

5. Serve venison medallions with apple slices and wild blueberry sauce. Garnish with fresh thyme leaves.

RECIPE PROVIDED BY THE WILD BLUEBERRY ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA AT WILDBLUEBERRIES.COM, AND ADAPTED BY THERESA ALBERT.

THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND TORONTO PERSONAL NUTRITIONIST. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM.

Home, home on the range: Grill up some bison burgers

This recipe for Bison Burgers makes two patties. CONTRIBUTED

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients together and grill for 7 minutes on each side. Yields 2 delicious bison burgers. (If you wish to make the recipe go further, you can add gluten-free bread crumbs or gluten-free crushed crackers to the mixture.)

2. Serving Suggestion: Top with 1 tbsp. of Spicy Marmalade. To make marmalade, place all ingredients in a small bowl and mix together.

RECIPE COURTESY XYLA

Ingredients

Burgers

- 0.300 kg ground lean bison
- 1/2 cup fresh green onions, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp. Xyla Ketchup
- 3 tbsps. Xyla Sesame Teriyaki sauce
- 2-3 sprinkles cumin powder
- ½ to 1 tsp. crushed red pepper minced to taste
- 1/2 to 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Spicy Marmalade Recipe

- 1 jar peach or apricot jam
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced (with pinch of sea salt)
- 1 inch piece of ginger, freshly grated
- 2-3 tbsps. organic white onions, diced
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper or to taste

4 SPORTS

Alpine skiing

Vonn breaks World Cup wins record

Lindsey Vonn won a super-G Monday for her record 63rd World Cup victory and celebrated with an embrace from a surprise visitor — boyfriend Tiger Woods.

The American broke Annemarie Moser-Proell's 35-year-old record of 62 World Cup wins with a flawless run down the Olympia delle Tofane course, finishing by a huge 0.85 ahead of Anna Fenninger of Austria.

Wearing a mask, Woods weaved through the crowd unnoticed until he shared an emotional embrace with Vonn, who had no idea that the golfer was coming.

"No way!" Vonn exclaimed when she spotted him.

Woods reportedly had a tooth knocked out when a media member with a shoulder-mounted video surged toward the awards podium, turned and hit Woods in the mouth. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moguls

Canadian men sweep podium

Mikael Kingsbury led a Canadian podium sweep in the men's dual moguls at the freestyle world championships on Monday.

Kingsbury, from Deux-Montagnes, Que., defeated Philippe Marquis of Quebec City 20-15 in the men's final for his first world dual moguls gold. Marc-Antoine Gagnon of Terrebonne, Que., completed the Canadian sweep of medals by finishing third. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Chris Phillips has been the odd man out on the blue-line in Ottawa's last two games. JANA CHYTILOVA/FREESTYLE PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

Phillips coping with life in the press box

Senators. Veteran defenceman has been a healthy scratch seven times since coaching change, but will suit up Tuesday in New York

A player watching from the press box never wants a teammate to struggle, but it's often the only way to get back in the lineup.

Just ask Chris Phillips.

The veteran defenceman will suit up on Tuesday when his Ottawa Senators visit the New York Rangers, after sitting out the past two games as a healthy scratch.

Phillips replaces Patrick Wiercioch, who struggled in the Senators' 3-2 loss to the Carolina Hurricanes on Saturday.

The 36-year-old Phillips has been a healthy scratch seven times this season, all since Dave Cameron replaced Paul MacLean as head coach.

"To be brutally honest it's a really hard position," Phillips said Monday of sitting out. "You want to see the team win and we want to push to get in the playoffs, (but) the reality is if we don't win there's probably a better chance that I might get in the lineup the next game. Obviously I'm not hoping for that, but in the back of your mind you think: 'Well maybe I might be in next game if that's how it turns out.'

"It's kind of a weird feeling."

With seven healthy defencemen the reality is someone always has to be the odd man out and soon enough it will be two as Mark Borowiecki continues to rehab his leg injury.

"It's difficult," said Phillips. "It's not a position that anybody wants to be in. If it's me in the lineup then it's one of the other guys that's out and that's not where they want to be. I guess in some ways ... what you want is for us to be pushing each other. We need to be on top of our game to stay in the lineup." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Back in play

16

Chris Neil will also return to the lineup on Tuesday after missing the last 16 games with a knee injury.

NFL investigating Pats for deflated footballs

LeGarrette Blount had no troubles with the pigskin as he scored three touchdowns for the Patriots on Sunday. ELISE AMENDOLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NFL is investigating whether the New England Patriots deflated footballs that were used in their AFC championship game victory over the Indianapolis Colts.

"We are looking into it," league spokesman Brian McCarthy wrote in an email to The Associated Press on Monday. "We do not have anything further to add at this point."

The inquiry was first reported by the website of WTHR-TV in Indiana, citing an unnamed source.

The Patriots have come under scrutiny with regard to NFL rules in the past, most infamously when they were punished for videotaping sideline signals used by the New York Jets during a 2007 game. Coach Bill Belichick was fined $500,000, and the team was docked $250,000 and stripped of its 2008 first-round draft pick.

According to the NFL rule book, home teams are responsible for furnishing playable balls at all times. Each team brings 12 primary balls, while home teams are required to also bring 12 backup balls.

Once the referee makes sure the footballs are properly inflated, they're delivered to ball attendants provided by the home team. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

QB comparison

In the Patriots' 45-7 win, Tom Brady threw for three touchdowns while the Colts' Andrew Luck completed only 12 of 33 passes for no TDs and two interceptions.

NBA

Warriors thump Nuggets 122-79

Klay Thompson scored 22 points, Stephen Curry had 20, and the Golden State Warriors matched a franchise record with their 16th consecutive home win, topping the Denver Nuggets 122-79 on Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Scherzer, Nationals ink deal: Source

Max Scherzer will become the highest-paid right-handed pitcher ever after agreeing to a $210 million US, seven-year contract with Washington, including a record $50 million signing bonus, according to a source. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Max Scherzer in action for Detroit. PAUL BEATY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Africa Cup of Nations

Algeria rallies to beat South Africa

Tournament favourite Algeria avoided an unpleasant surprise at the African Cup of Nations on Monday.

Algeria went behind, then saw South Africa miss a penalty before rallying to win 3-1 to open its campaign. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EPL

West Brom holds off Everton

Kevin Mirallas missed a penalty as Everton was held to a 0-0 draw by West Bromwich Albion on Monday.

Mirallas refused to let regular taker Leighton Baines shoot the penalty despite protests of his teammates. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bouchard on to second round

Australian Open. Genie Army of fans back in full force behind Canadian star in Melbourne

Eugenie Bouchard powered into the second round of the Australian Open on Monday as the seventh-seeded Canadian star defeated German Anna-Lena Friedsam 6-2, 6-4.

The Genie Army of fans, which came together informally at the event a year ago, was back out in force, cheering on the Westmount, Que., native throughout the 78-minute match.

"The Genie Army started here last year; I'm happy they are still alive and strong," Bouchard said after breaking her 98th-ranked opponent four times and hitting 20 winners along the way.

"The first match of a Grand Slam is never easy, I'm happy to get through," she said.

"I'm so happy to be back in Melbourne. The support here is crazy."

Bouchard broke twice per set in a routine performance against a player who beat her in an entry-level event in 2012.

"I was happy to start strong," said Bouchard.

"Conditions were tough, it was a bit windy and she's a good player. I was happy to stay solid, but there are still a lot of things to improve."

Bouchard will next face Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands, who defeated Australian Daria Gavrilova 7-5 (10-8), 5-7, 6-2.

Melbourne was the venue for Bouchard's breakthrough in 2014, when she reached the final four and duplicated the showing at the French Open before playing in the Wimbledon final.

At the All England Club last year, Bouchard became the first Canadian to reach a Grand Slam final.

Two other Canadian tennis stars make their first appearances at the Australian Open on Tuesday.

Eighth-seeded Milos Raonic of Thornhill, Ont., faces Illya Marchenko of Ukraine while Vancouver's Vasek Pospisil takes on Sam Querry of the United States. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Eugenie Bouchard finished off German Anna-Lena Friedsam 6-2, 6-4 in 78 minutes on Monday in Melbourne, Australia. HANNAH PETERS/GETTY IMAGES

Hawks' defence holds on, Atlanta beats Detroit

The Hawks paid a tribute on Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday in Atlanta. CURTIS COMPTON/ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NBA's best defence is keepingnthe Atlanta Hawks' winning streak intact.

The Hawks won their 13th straight game, one shy of tying the team record, as Mike Scott and Paul Millsap each scored 20 points Monday in a 93-82 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

Atlanta is allowing 96.3 points per game, tops in the league. Strong defence helped the Hawks overcome poor shooting from some of their usual scoring leaders against Detroit.

The Pistons, held to a season-low 12 points in the opening quarter, made only 35.4 per cent of their shots — 29 of 82.

"Our defence has got to be there every night and I think that is what put us in position … to pull out a tough win," Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer said.

The Hawks haven't lost since Dec. 26 against Milwaukee. They have won 27 of 29 to move to the top of the Eastern Conference. Monday's win before a sellout crowd of 19,108 opened a seven-game homestand.

"We want to stay humble as well," Scott said.

Scott had eight points as the Hawks pulled away in the fourth quarter. His scoring off the bench helped offset poor shooting from Jeff Teague and Kyle Korver, who combined to make only eight of 23 shots.

"We needed someone to score because a lot of us were off in the first half," Korver said. "Mike came in and gave us that spark."

Al Horford added 14 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

The Pistons were trying for their franchise-record eighth straight road win. Detroit had won 11 of 13 overall before its third straight loss to the Hawks this season.

Detroit coach Stan Van Gundy said Atlanta's defence "was really good … a big part of it."

Greg Monroe led Detroit with 16 points and 20 rebounds. Andre Drummond added 13 points and 18 rebounds, but made only three of 12 free throws. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You have started many new things in recent weeks and now you want to see some results.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You may be intensely ambitious but don't expect too much too soon. A step at a time will get you where you need to go.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
So many of the things you have been worrying about will fade away over the next few days. It's doubtful whether they existed in the first place but the important thing is you feel free at last.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
The planets indicate if you work hard now you will make a name for yourself and make a handsome profit before the end of the month.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
There is no point trying to keep secrets from loved ones because they know you too well and can sense when you are trying to hide something.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The Sun moves from one of the more serious areas of your chart today but that doesn't mean you can't have fun. You will, however, have to focus more on work and health issues.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You can change a number of things over the next few days but if you really want a better day-to-day experience you must change your attitude.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Put other people's needs first today and tomorrow, because if you do a favour for partners and loved ones now they will do no end of favours for you.

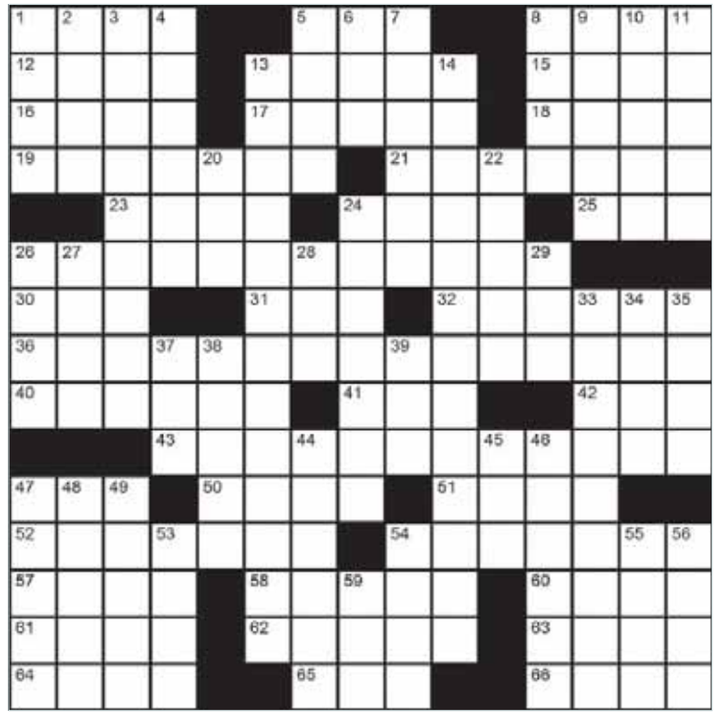
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is a good time for traveling and having fun with your friends. Don't worry if you are a bit short of cash because you will meet up with someone who enjoys buying you things.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Your head is full of good ideas and some of them may even be great but now you need to get your act together and decide which should be followed up on.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
A little bit of effort will go a long way over the next 24 hours. All things are possible if you desire them enough.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will be in a thoughtful mood today and that's good because the more you think about certain issues now the more likely it is they will work out for you later.

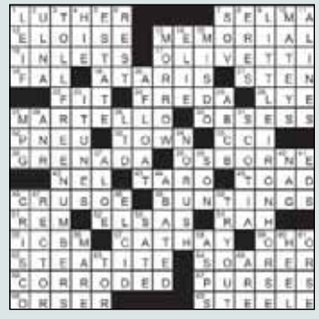
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Medieval chest
5. Dickens character
8. Pining
12. #13-Down ingr.
13. Songstress Ms. Black
15. Island of Indonesia
16. Test product
17. "I shall never see _ __ lovely as..." - Joyce Kilmer
18. Ottawa Senators Right Wing Mr. Condra
19. Pertaining to goats
21. Microsoft game console: 2 wds.
23. How music might be released: wd. + acr.
24. Person departing
25. Mr. Knight
26. 1847: M-H = __-__ (Agricultural machinery manufacturer founded in Newcastle, ON)
30. 'Meth' suffix
31. Low: French
32. High IQ society member
36. __ __ of Canada (Art program maintained by Library and Archives that depicts historic Canucks): 2 wds.
40. Lippy one
41. Time off letters
42. Jogged
43. Steven Blaney = Canada's Minister of __ __
47. Eggs, scientifically
50. US Attorney General Mr. Holder
51. Musical instrument
52. "Star Trek" alien
54. Light bulb type
57. Applaud
58. Tibet's neighbour
60. Mother: French
61. Hertz rival
62. Dentist's feared tool
63. European erupter
64. Movie company
65. Fixed
66. Canadian rebel Louis

Down
1. 'High Voltage' band
2. Ms. Perlman
3. Oscar Peterson and Glenn Gould, at times
4. Fallen-to-forest-floors findings
5. Tube
6. UN workers' gr.
7. Reflex-testing hammer
8. Wild goat
9. Futuristic card
10. "Crazy" songstress Patsy
11. Boosted
13. Coffee Crisp, for one: 3 wds.
14. Actress from London, ON who stars as Amy Fleming on CBC's "Heartland": 2 wds.
20. Beverage brrrr-er
22. Oxford University college
24. __ bypass surgery
26. Driving directions drawings
27. Buffalo type
28. Yes, in Japan
29. Prog. on Mike Myers' resume
33. Ecosystem of Tanzania famous for the land migration of wildlife
34. Smell _ __ (Be suspicious)
35. Central Park locale: acr. + acr.
37. Meal-making measurement, mini-ly
38. J.R.R. Tolkien = John Ronald __ Tolkien
39. Health supplements store
44. Ocean crossers
45. Certain ISP
46. Liza __ (Kitchener, ON born host of Global's "The Morning Show")
47. Killer whales
48. Car company
49. At full force, poetically
53. __-daisy!
54. Cease
55. Coastal bird, variantly
56. Actress Patricia
59. "American __" (1999)

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku

5	3	2	9	8	1	7	4	6
7	9	1	2	4	6	3	5	8
4	8	6	5	7	3	2	1	9
1	2	8	4	5	9	6	7	3
6	5	3	1	2	7	9	8	4
9	4	7	6	3	8	1	2	5
2	6	9	8	1	5	4	3	7
8	7	4	3	9	2	5	6	1
3	1	5	7	6	4	8	9	2

Today's Sudoku

		9	4	8		7	5	
8								
2					5			9
		2						3
4				1				5
3						9		
9			3					2
								8
	7	8		2	4	6		

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